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CONTENT

DILI BISHOP DENIES HUMAN RIGHTS LETTER

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Jakarta (J.P.) : The catholic apostolic administrator in East Timor has denied writing a document alleging human rights abuses by the Indonesian military in the province. Carlos Ximenes Belo, apostolic administrator in the East Timor capital of Dili, made the denial in a telegram to the Papal Nuncio in Jakarta.

A Lisbon based catholic church group two weeks ago released a four-page document purportedly from Monsignor Belo and dated January 1, 1985. The document, according to Lisbon church officials, was "smuggled out of Indonesia through religious channels".

The document claims that Indonesian security forces have arbitrarily arrested or summarily executed guerillas and their sympathizers and have forced peasants to take part in anti-rebel campaigns. Indonesian authorities in Jakarta and Dili have strongly denied those kinds of charges in the past, and in interviews with domestic and foreign journalists Monsignor Belo has persistently denied making those kinds of statements.

Papal Nuncio to Indonesia, Monsignor Pablo Puente, told the Jakarta Post Friday that he did not know how the document surfaced in Lisbon and was only aware of the telegram he received from Monsignor Belo. Monsignor Puente added that he would be travelling to East Timor next week to ordain three Timorese priests.

Stories about the document from Lisbon have subsequently appeared on wire services and in newspapers in the United States.

Over the past year several delegations from foreign embassies, including ones from the United States and Australia, have visited East Timor but have been unable to discover the kinds of "human rights abuses" referred to in the Lisbon document that Monsignor Belo has repudiated. A recent tour of the province by Jakarta based foreign correspondents also could not unearth the kinds of charges referred to in the document.

The embassy delegations have told newsmen after their tours of Indonesia's newest province that they had been generally impressed with the progress of development in East Timor, which was integrated with Indonesia in 1976 following a year-long civil war.

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